

IN THE CLAIMS

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Please amend the claims as follows:

B1  
~~Claim 1 (Original): A screening method comprising the steps of:~~  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell; and  
setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone.

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Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A screening method as defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and  
wherein a distance between respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent  
~~adjacent grids to be started to set the threshold values for the~~ halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

Claim 3 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 1,  
wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 4 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 2,  
wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

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~~Claim 5 (Original): A screening method comprising the steps of:~~  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and  
setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone.

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BC1>  
Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A screening method as defined in claim 5, further comprising the step of:  
combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and  
wherein a distance between adjacent grids to be started to set the threshold values for the respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

Claim 7 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 5,  
wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A screening method as defined in claim 6,  
wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are ~~not the~~ not the same.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A screening method comprising the steps of:

~~cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-~~  
regular hexagonal cells;  
  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and  
  
dividing an interior of each of said respective hexagonal cells to form respective sub-  
matrices.

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Claim 10 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 9,  
wherein in said dividing step each sub-matrix is employed for an auxiliary dot.

Claim 11 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 9,  
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

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Claim 12 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 10,  
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claim 13 (Original): A screening apparatus comprising:  
  
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square  
cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
  
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a  
combined single halftone cell; and  
  
threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said  
single halftone cell to express a halftone.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 13, further  
comprising:

~~means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without~~  
any gaps therebetween; and

wherein a distance between ~~adjacent grids to be started to set the threshold values for~~  
the respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

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Claim 15 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 13,  
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said  
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

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Claim 16 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 14,  
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said  
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 17 (Original): A screening apparatus comprising:  
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square  
cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a  
combined single halftone cell; and  
threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the  
respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 17, further  
comprising:

~~means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without~~  
any gaps therebetween; and

~~wherein a distance between adjacent grids to be started to set the threshold values for~~  
~~the~~ respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

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Claim 19 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 17,  
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said  
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

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Claim 20 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 18,  
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said  
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus comprising:  
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square  
cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a  
combined single halftone cell; and  
sub-matrix forming means for dividing an interior of each of said respective  
hexagonal cells to form sub-matrices.

Claim 22 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 21, wherein each sub-  
matrix is employed for an auxiliary dot.

~~Claim 23 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 21,~~

~~wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.~~

~~Claim 24 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 22,~~

~~wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.~~

B  
Claim 25 (Original): A screening method comprising the steps of:

cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells; and

combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell.

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Claim 26 (Original): A screening apparatus comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells; and

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell.

Claim 27 (New): A screening method comprising the steps of:

cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell;

setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;

combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 28 (New): A screening method as defined in claim 27,  
wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

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Claim 29 (New): A screening method comprising the steps of:  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;  
setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;  
combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and  
wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 30 (New): A screening method as defined in claim 29,  
wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 31 (New): A screening apparatus comprising:  
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

~~half-tone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single half-tone cell;~~

~~threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said single half-tone cell to express a half-tone;~~

~~means for combining plural of said half-tone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and~~

~~wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent half-tone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.~~

Claim 32 (New): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 31,  
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single half-tone cell are not the same.

Claim 33 (New): A screening apparatus comprising:  
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

half-tone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single half-tone cell;

threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the respective grids of said single half-tone cell to express a half-tone;

means for combining plural of said half-tone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent half-tone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.



~~Claim 34 (New): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 33,~~

wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said  
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.